



22 April 2021

Ms Lyn Beverly
Committee Secretary
Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Committee
Department of the Senate
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Ms Beverly

I am writing to correct evidence given during the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade Senate Estimates hearing on Thursday 25 March 2021.

I would like to clarify my response to Senator Sheldon's question that relates to how the department is determining priority locations for the rollout of COVID-19 vaccinations to staff and dependants in the overseas network (refer to Hansard page 93). I made the following statement:

Ms Talbot: Senator, perhaps I could come back to your question about high-risk locations. As part of our approach, we have categorised them into priority 1, priority 2 and priority 3 countries. Obviously, those that are priority 1 countries are countries where at the moment, based on the level of COVID transmission, there has been an assessment by our principal medical adviser and that has helped in determining that. Obviously, as you would appreciate, the environment alters and we are taking assessments on a day-by-day basis.

I would like to amend the record to clarify that, while the level of COVID transmission is a key factor in determining priority locations, other factors are also considered. I consider this warrants correction of the record, given the importance of vaccinations for the welfare of staff in the overseas network. I request the following amendment to the record:

Ms Talbot: Senator, perhaps I could come back to your question about high-risk locations. As part of our vaccination rollout approach, we have categorised our posts into priority 1, priority 2 and priority 3 countries. An assessment by our principal medical adviser of the level of local COVID transmission has helped in determining priority 1 countries, as have other factors, such as accessibility of local medical care and evacuation options. Obviously, as you would appreciate, the environment alters and we are taking assessments on a day-by-day basis.

Yours sincerely

~~Jo Talbot~~
Chief People Officer